Q: Where can you obtain more information about protecting your drinking water?

A: Contact —

Your local water utility at:

_____

Your state source water protection coordinator at:

_____

Your local Extension Office at:

_____

The Environmental Protection Agency's Drinking Water Hotline at 800-426-4791

The National Drinking Water Clearing House at 1-800-624-8301

International City/County ICMA Management Association
icma.org

Funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water

Q&A

FACT SHEET

Source Water Awareness

PROTECT YOUR DRINKING WATER
PROTECT THE SOURCE

Q: What is the source of your drinking water?

A: Drinking water comes from two major sources, surface water and groundwater. Surface water includes lakes, rivers, streams, and reservoirs. Groundwater includes underground aquifers.

Q: What are rivers and streams?

A: Rivers and streams are bodies of water that flow naturally over the Earth's surface. The water in rivers and streams comes from rainfall, snow, and other forms of precipitation.

Q: What are lakes and reservoirs?

A: Lakes and reservoirs are large inland bodies of water that are natural or human made. Lakes and reservoirs are sometimes used to supply drinking water.

Q: What are Aquifers?

A: Aquifers are formed when air spaces within rocks beneath the

Earth's surface become filled with water. Aquifers transmit water to wells and springs to supply drinking water.

Q: What is the value of your drinking water?

A: Safe drinking water is essential to a community's health and economic viability. Unsafe drinking water can lead to long-term health effects such as cancer, as well as to immediate health threats that can sicken a whole community. Without a safe and adequate water supply, businesses will not remain in or relocate to a community.

Q: What are the potential threats to your drinking water?

A: The most common threat to surface water is pollution from contaminated runoff. Runoff is the part of rainfall, snow melt, or irrigation water that does not evaporate or travel downward through soil to groundwater. Instead, it moves over land, through drains and sewers to streams, rivers, lakes or reservoirs. The most common threats to groundwater are insanitary landfills, leaking underground storage tanks, septic systems, and misused fertilizers and pesticides.

Q: What can you do to deal with these threats?

A: The best way to protect your drinking water is to adopt practices that keep pollution out of your water supply. Practices such as keeping litter, leaves, and debris out of streets and gutters; disposing of chemicals properly; using fertilizers as specified; managing animal waste to minimize contamination of water sources; regularly inspecting and pumping out septic systems; and regularly testing private wells provide a good starting point.